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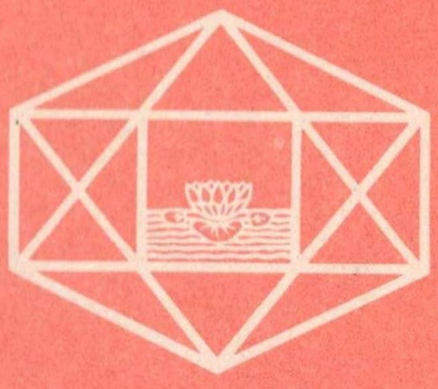

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The AIM presents in its each issue selected passages from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, on the occasion of the Mother's Birth Centenary Year, February 21, 1977 — February 21, 1978.

Many a time we forget the Divine or lose touch with Him, for our consciousness is divided between desires and Divine. The Mother has therefore advised us to keep "Remember and Offer" as our one motto in our all pursuits. Let us make this our mantra through our minute to minute living, in this Centenary Year.

Two Kinds of Action

The Divine works through our nature and according to our nature; if our nature is imperfect, the work also will be imperfect, mixed, inadequate. Even it may be marred by gross errors, falsehoods, moral weaknesses, diverting influences. The work of the Divine will be done in us even then, but according to our weakness, not according to the strength and purity of its source. If ours were not an integral Yoga, if we sought only the liberation of the self within us or the motionless existence of Purusha separated from Prakriti, this dynamic imperfection might not matter. Calm, untroubled, not depressed, not elated, refusing to accept the perfection or imperfection, fault or merit, sin or virtue as ours, perceiving that it is the modes of Nature working in the field of her modes that make this mixture, we could withdraw into the silence of the spirit and, pure, untouched, witness only the workings of Prakriti. But in an integral realisation this can only be a step on the way, not our last resting-place. For we aim at the divine realisation not only in the immobility of the Spirit, but also in the movement of Nature. And this cannot be altogether until we can feel the presence and power of the Divine in every step, motion, figure of

SRI AUROBINDO

(Photograph taken in 1919-20)

our activities, in every turn of our will, in every thought, feeling and impulse. No doubt, we can feel that in a sense even in the nature of the Ignorance, but it is the divine Power and Presence in a disguise, a diminution, an inferior figure. Ours is a greater demand, that our nature shall be a power of the Divine in the Truth of the Divine, in the Light, in the force of the eternal self-conscient Will, in the wideness of the sempiternal Knowledge.

After the removal of the veil of ego, the removal of the veil of Nature and her inferior modes that govern our mind, life and body. As soon as the limits of the ego begin to fade, we see how that veil is constituted and detect the action of cosmic Nature in us, and in or behind cosmic Nature we sense the presence of the cosmic Self and the dynamisms of the world-pervading Ishwara. The Master of the instrument stands behind all this working, and even within the working there is his touch and the drive of a great guiding or disposing Influence. It is no longer ego or ego-force that we serve; we obey the World-Master and his evo-

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...“Even as I am appointed by Thee seated in my heart, so, O Lord, I act.” But still this action may be of two very different kinds, one only illumined, the other transformed and uplifted into a greater supernature.... It is possible to rise beyond spiritualised mind and to act spontaneously in the living presence of the original divine Truth-Force of the Supreme Mother.

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lutionary impulse. At each step we say in the language of the Sanskrit verse, "Even as I am appointed by Thee seated in my heart, so, O Lord, I act." But still this action may be of two very different kinds, one only illumined, the other transformed and uplifted into a greater supernature. For we may keep on in the way of action upheld and followed by our nature when by her and her illusion of egoism we were "turned as if mounted on a machine," but now with a perfect understanding of the mechanism and its utilisation for his world purposes by the Master of works whom we feel behind it. This is indeed as far as even many great Yogis have reached on the levels of spiritualised mind; but it need not be so always, for there is a greater supramental possibility. It is possible to rise beyond spiritualised mind and to act spontaneously in the living presence of the original divine Truth-Force of the Supreme Mother. Our motion one with her motion and merged in it, our will one with her will, our energy absolved in her energy, we shall feel her working through us as the Divine manifest in a supreme Wisdom-Power, and we shall be aware of the transformed mind, life and body only as the channels of a supreme Light and Force beyond them, infallible in its steps because transcendent and total in its knowledge. Of this Light and Force we shall not only be the recipients, channels, instruments, but become a part of it in a supreme uplifted abiding experience.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, Cent. ed. vol. 20, pp. 239-41)

"Remember and Offer"

Q: "When we are concentrated in mental movements or intellectual pursuits, why do we sometimes forget or lose touch with the Divine?"

You lose it because your consciousness is still divided. The Divine has not settled into your mind; you are not wholly consecrated to the Divine Life. Otherwise you could concentrate to any extent upon such things and still you would have the sense of being helped and supported by the Divine.

In all pursuits, intellectual or active, your one motto should be, "Remember and Offer". Let whatever you do be done as an offering to the Divine. And this too will be an excellent discipline for you; it will prevent you from doing many foolish and useless things.

Q: "Often in the beginning of the action this can be done; but as one gets engrossed in the work, one forgets. How is one to remember?"

The condition to be aimed at, the real achievement of Yoga, the final perfection and attainment, for which all else is only a preparation, is a consciousness in

THE MOTHER

(Photograph taken in 1903-05)

which it is impossible to do anything without the Divine; for then, if you are without the Divine, the very source of your action disappears; knowledge, power, all are gone. But so long as you feel that the powers you use are your own, you will not feel missing the Divine support.

In the beginning of the Yoga you are apt to forget the Divine very often. But by constant aspiration you increase your remembrance and you diminish the forgetfulness. But this should not be done as a severe discipline or a duty; it must be a movement of love and joy. Then very soon a stage will come when, if you do not feel the presence of the Divine at every moment and whatever you are doing, you feel at once lonely and sad and miserable.

Whenever you find that you can do something without feeling the presence of the Divine and yet be perfectly comfortable, you must understand that you are not consecrated in that part of your being. That is the way of the ordinary humanity which does not feel any need of the Divine. But for a seeker of the Divine Life it is very different. And when you have entirely realised unity with the Divine, then, if the Divine were only for a second to withdraw from you, you would simply drop dead; for the Divine is now the Life of your life, your whole existence, your single and complete support. If the Divine is not there, nothing is left.

THE MOTHER

(*Conversations*, 1961 ed., pp. 42-44)

How to Distinguish between Personal Motives and Divine Will

In the depths of your consciousness is the psychic being, the temple of the Divine within you. This is the centre round which should come about the unification of all these divergent parts, all these contradictory movements of your being. Once you have got the consciousness of the psychic being and its aspiration, these doubts and difficulties can be destroyed. It takes more or less time, but you will surely succeed in the end. Once you have turned to the Divine, saying, "I want to be yours," and the Divine has said, "Yes," the whole world cannot keep you from it. When the central being has made its surrender, the chief difficulty has disappeared. The outer being is like a crust. In ordinary people the crust is so hard and thick that they are not conscious of the Divine within them. If once, even for a moment only, the inner being has said, "I am here and I am yours," then it is as though a bridge has been built and little by little the crust becomes thinner and thinner until the two parts are wholly joined and the inner and the outer become one.

Ambition has been the undoing of many Yogis. That canker can hide long. Many people start on the

Path without any sense of it. But when they get powers, their ambition rises up, all the more violently because it had not been thrown out in the beginning.

A story is told of a Yogi who had attained wonderful powers. He was invited by his disciples to a great dinner. It was served on a big low table. The disciples asked their Master to show his power in some way. He knew he should not, but the seed of ambition was there in him and he thought, "After all, it is a very innocent thing and it may prove to them that such things are possible and teach them the greatness of God." So he said, "Take away the table, but only the table, let the table-cloth remain as it is with all the dishes upon it." The disciples cried out, "Oh, that cannot be done, everything will fall down." But he insisted and they removed the table from under the cloth. Lo, the miracle! The cloth and all that was upon it remained there just as though the table was underneath. The disciples wondered. But all on a sudden the Master jumped up and rushed out screaming and crying, "Nevermore shall I have a disciple, nevermore! Woe is me! I have betrayed my God." His heart was on fire; he had used the divine powers for selfish ends.

It is always wrong to display powers. This does not

Once you have turned to the Divine, saying, "I want to be yours," and the Divine has said, "Yes," the whole world cannot keep you from it.

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mean that there is no use for them. But they have to be used in the same way as they came. They come by union with the Divine. They must be used by the will of the Divine and not for display. If you come across someone who is blind and you have the power to make him see — if it is the Divine Will that the man shall see, you have only to say, "Let him see" and he will see. But if you wish to make him see simply because you want to cure him, then you use the power to satisfy your personal ambition. Most often, in such cases, you not only lose your power but you create a great disturbance in the man. Yet in appearance the two ways are the same; but in one case you act because of the Divine Will and in the other for some personal motive.

How are we to know, you will ask, when it is the Divine Will that makes us act? The Divine Will is not difficult to recognise. It is unmistakable. You can know it without being very far on the path. Only you must listen to its voice, the small voice that is here in the heart. Once you are accustomed to listen, if you do anything that is contrary to the Divine Will, you feel an uneasiness. If you persist on the wrong track, you get very much disturbed. If, however, you give some material excuse as the cause of your uneasiness and proceed on your way, you gradually lose the faculty of perception and finally you may go on doing all kinds of wrong and feel no uneasiness. But if, when once you feel the least disturbance, you stop and ask of your inner self, "What is the cause of this?" then you do

get the real answer and the whole thing becomes quite clear. Do not try to give a material excuse when you feel a little depression or a slight uneasiness. When you stop and look about for the reason, be absolutely straight and sincere. At first your mind will construct a very plausible and beautiful explanation. Do not accept it, but look beyond and ask, "What is it that is behind this movement? Why am I doing this?" Finally you will discover, hidden in a corner, the little ripple — a slight wrong turn or twist in your attitude that is causing the trouble or disturbance.

One of the commonest forms of ambition is the idea of service to humanity. All attachment to such service or work is a sign of personal ambition. The Guru who believes that he has a great truth to teach to humanity and who wants many disciples and who feels uncomfortable when the disciples go away or who seizes on anybody that comes and tries to make him a disciple, is evidently following nothing but his ambition. You must be able, if you are ready to follow the Divine order, to take up whatever work you are given, even a stupendous work, and leave it the next day with the same quietness with which you took it up and

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The attitude of the ascetic who says, "I want nothing" and the attitude of the man of the world who says, "I want this thing" are the same. The one may be as much attached to his renunciation as the other to his possession.

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not feel that the responsibility is yours. There should be no attachment — to any object or any mode of life. You must be absolutely free. If you want to have the true Yogic attitude, you must be able to accept everything that comes from the Divine and let it go easily and without regret. The attitude of the ascetic who says, "I want nothing" and the attitude of the man of the world who says, "I want this thing" are the same. The one may be as much attached to his renunciation as the other to his possession.

You must accept all things — and only those things — that come from the Divine. Because things can come from concealed desires. The desires work in the subconscious and bring things to you which, although you may not recognise them as such, nevertheless do not come from the Divine but from disguised desires.

You can easily know when a thing comes from the Divine. You feel free, you are at ease, you are in peace. But when something presents itself to you and you jump at it and cry out, "Oh, at last I have it," then you can know for certain that it does not come from the Divine. Equanimity is the essential condition of union and communion with the Divine.

THE MOTHER

(*Conversations*, 1961 ed., pp. 14-18)

How to Sleep Well

Q: How can one remain conscious in the midst of unconsciousness ?

One must be vigilant.

Q: And when asleep ?

One can remain conscious in sleep, we have already explained that ! One must work.

Q: Then one doesn't sleep !

Not at all, one sleeps much better, one has a quiet sleep instead of a restless one. Most people do so many things in their sleep that they wake up more tired than before. We have already spoken about this once. Naturally, if you keep yourself from sleeping, you won't sleep. I always tell those who complain of not being able to sleep, "Meditate then and you will end by sleeping." It is better to fall asleep while concentrating than "like that", scattered and strewn without knowing even where one is.

To sleep well one must learn how to sleep.

If one is physically very tired, it is better not to go to sleep immediately, otherwise one falls into the inconscient. If one is very tired, one must stretch out on the bed, relax, loosen all the nerves one after another until one becomes like a rumpled cloth in one's bed, as though one had neither bones nor muscles. When one has done that, the same thing must be done in the mind. Relax, do not concentrate on any idea or try to solve a problem or ruminate on impressions, sensations or emotions you had during the day. All that must be allowed to drop off quietly: one gives oneself up, one is indeed like a rag. When you have succeeded in doing this, there is always a little flame, there — that flame never goes out and you become conscious of it when you have managed this relaxation. And all of a sudden this little flame rises slowly into an aspiration for the divine life, the truth, the consciousness of the Divine, the union with the inner being, it goes higher and higher, it rises, rises, like that, very gently. Then everything gathers there, and if at that moment you fall asleep, you have the best sleep you could possibly have. I guarantee that if you do this

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More than a third of our existence is passed in sleep and, consequently, the time devoted to physical sleep well deserves our attention .... I say physical sleep, because it would be wrong to believe that our whole being sleeps when our body is in slumber.

The Mother

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carefully, you are sure to sleep, and also sure that instead of falling into a dark hole you will sleep in light, and when you get up in the morning you will be fresh, fit, content, happy and full of energy for the day.

Q: When one is conscious in sleep, does the brain sleep or not ?

When does the brain ever sleep ? When does it sleep ? This is of all things the most difficult. If you succeed in making your brain sleep, it would be wonderful. How it runs on ! That is vagabondage. It is this I meant when I spoke of relaxation in the brain. If you do it really well, your brain enters a silent restfulness and that is wonderful; when you attain that, five minutes of that and you are quite fresh afterwards, you can solve a heap of problems.

Q: If the brain is always working, why don't we remember what has happened during the night ?

Because you have not caught the consciousness at its work. And perhaps because if you remembered what was going on in your brain, you would be horrified ! It is really like a madhouse, all these ideas which clash, all dancing a saraband in the head ! it is as if one were throwing balls in all directions at once. So, if you saw that, you would be a bit troubled.

THE MOTHER

(*Questions and Answers — 1950-51*, Cent. ed., pp. 352-53)

The Turn Towards Unity

The surfaces of life are easy to understand; their laws, characteristic movements, practical utilities are ready to our hand and we can seize on them and turn them to account with a sufficient facility and rapidity. But they do not carry us very far. They suffice for an acitve superficial life from day to day, but they do not solve the great problems of existence. On the other hand, the knowledge of life's profundities, its potent secrets, its great, hidden, all-determining laws is exceedingly difficult to us. We have found no plummet that can fathom these depths; they seem to us a vague, indeterminate movement, a profound obscurity from which the mind recoils willingly to play with the fret and foam and facile radiances of the surface. Yet it is these depths and their unseen forces that we ought to know if we would understand existence; on the surface we get only Nature's secondary rules and practical bye-laws which help us to tide over the difficulties of the moment and to organise empirically without understanding them her continual transitions.

Nothing is more obscure to humanity or less seized by its understanding, whether in the power that moves it or the sense of the aim towards which it moves,

than its own communal and collective life. Sociology does not help us, for it only gives us the general story of the past and the external conditions under which communities have survived. History teaches us nothing; it is a confused torrent of events and personalities or a kaleidoscope of changing institutions. We do not seize the real sense of all this change and this continual streaming forward of human life in the channels of Time. What we do seize are current or recurrent phenomena, facile generalisations, partial ideas. We talk of democracy, aristocracy and autocracy, collectivism and individualism, imperialism and nationalism, the State and the commune, capitalism and labour; we advance hasty generalisations and make absolute systems which are positively announced today only to be abandoned perforce tomorrow; we espouse causes and ardent enthusiasms whose triumph turns to an early disillusionment and then forsake them for others, perhaps for those that we have taken so much trouble to destroy. For a whole century mankind thirsts and battles after liberty and earns it with a better expense of toil, tears and blood; the century that enjoys without having fought for it turns away as from a puerile illusion and

We talk of democracy, aristocracy and autocracy, collectivism and individualism, imperialism and nationalism, the State and the commune, capitalism and labour; we advance hasty generalisations and make absolute systems which are positively announced today only to be abandoned perforce tomorrow.

is ready to renounce the depreciated gain as the price of some new good. And all this happens because our whole thought and action with regard to our collective life is shallow and empirical; it does not seek for, it does not base itself on a firm, profound and complete knowledge. The moral is not the vanity of human life, of its ardours and enthusiasms and of the ideals it pursues, but the necessity of a wiser, larger, more patient search after its true law and aim.

Today the ideal of human unity is more or less vaguely making its way to the front of our consciousness. The emergence of an ideal in human thought is always the sign of an intention in Nature, but not always of an intention to accomplish; sometimes it indicates only an attempt which is predestined to temporary failure. For Nature is slow and patient in her methods. She takes up ideas and half carries them out, then drops them by the wayside to resume them in some future era with a better combination. She tempts humanity, her thinking instrument, and tests how far it is ready for the harmony she has imagined; she allows and incites man to attempt and fail, so that he may learn and succeed better another time. Still the ideal, having once made its way to the front of thought, must certainly be attempted, and this ideal of human unity

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is likely to figure largely among the determining forces of the future; for the intellectual and material circumstances of the age have prepared and almost impose it, especially the scientific discoveries which have made our earth so small that its vastest kingdoms seem now no more than the provinces of a single country.

But this very commodity of the material circumstances may bring about the failure of the ideal; for when material circumstances favour a great change, but the heart and mind of the race are not really ready — especially the heart — failure may be predicted, unless indeed men are wise in time and accept the inner change along with the external readjustment. But at present the human intellect has been so much mechanised by physical Science that it is likely to attempt the revolution it is beginning to envisage principally or solely through mechanical means, through social and political adjustments. Now it is not by social and political devices, or at any rate not by these, chiefly or only, that the unity of the human race can be enduringly or fruitfully accomplished. ... ...

Yet the unity of mankind is evidently a part of Nature's eventual scheme and must come about. Only it must be under other conditions and with safeguards which will keep the race intact in the roots of its vitality, richly diverse in its oneness.

SRI AUROBINDO

(*The Ideal of Human Unity*, Cent. ed. vol. 15, pp. 261-66)

The Creative Soul

The difference between living organism and dead matter is that while the former is endowed with creative activity, the latter has only passive receptivity. Life adds, synthetises, new-creates — gives more than what it receives; matter only sums up, gathers, reflects, gives just what it receives. Life is living, glad and green through its creative genius. Creation in some form or other must be the core of everything that seeks vitality and growth, vigour and delight. Not only so, but a thing in order to be real must possess a creative function. We consider a shadow or an echo unreal precisely because they do not create but merely image or repeat, they do not bring out anything new but simply reflect what is given. The whole of existence is real because it is eternally creative.

So the problem that concerns man, the riddle that humanity has to solve is how to find out and follow the path of creativity. If we are not to be dead matter nor mere shadowy illusions we must be creative. A misconception that has vitiated our outlook in general and has been the most potent cause of a sterilising atavism in the moral evolution of humanity is that crea-

tivity is an aristocratic virtue, that it belongs only to the chosen few. A great poet or a mighty man of action creates indeed, but such a creator does not appear very frequently. A Shakespeare or a Napoleon is a rare phenomenon; they are, in reality, an exception to the general run of mankind. It is enough if we others can understand and follow them — *Mahājano yena gataḥ* — let the great souls initiate and create, the common souls have only to repeat and imitate.

But this is not as it should be, nor is it the truth of the matter. Every individual soul, however placed it may be, is by nature creative; every individual being lives to discover and to create. The inmost reality of man is not a passive receptacle, a mere responsive medium but it is a dynamo — a power-station generating and throwing out energy that produces and creates.

Now the centre of this energy, the matrix of creativity is the soul itself, one's own soul. If you want to create — live, grow and be real — find yourself, be yourself. The simple old wisdom still remains the eternal wisdom. It is because we fall off from our soul that we wander into side-paths, paths that do not belong to our real nature and hence that lead to imitation and repetition, decay and death. This is what

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The matrix of creativity is the soul itself, one's own soul. If you want to create — live, grow and be real — find yourself, be yourself.

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happens to what we call common souls. The force of circumstances, the pressure of environment or simply the momentum of custom or habit compel them to choose the easiest and the readiest way that may lie before them. They do not consult the demand of the inner being but the requirement of the moment. Our bodily needs, our vital hungers and our mental prejudices obsess and obscure the impulsions that thrill the hidden spirit. We hasten to gratify the immediate and forget the eternal, we clutch at the shadow and let go the substance. We are carried away in the flux and tumult of life. It is a mixed and collective whirl — a *Weltgeist* that moves and governs us. We are helpless straws drifting in the current. But manhood demands that we stop and pause, pull ourselves out of the Maelstorm and be what we are. We must shape things as we want and not allow things to shape us as they want.

Let each take cognisance of the godhead that is within him — for self is God — and in the strength of the soul-divinity create his universe. It does not matter what sort of universe he creates, so long as he creates it. The world created by a Buddha is not the same as that created by a Napoleon, nor should they be the same. It does not prove anything that I cannot become a Kalidasa; for that matter Kalidasa cannot become what I am. If you have not the genius of a Shankara it does not mean that you have no genius at all. Be and become yourself — *mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam,* says the Upanishad. The fountain-head of creative genius lies there, in the free choice and the particular

delight — the self-determination of the spirit within you and not in the desire for your neighbour's riches. The world has become dull and uniform and mechanical, since everybody endeavours to become not himself, but always somebody else. Imitation is servitude and servitude brings in grief.

In one's own soul lies the very height and profundity of a godhead. Each soul by bringing out the note that is his, makes for the most wondrous symphony. Once a man knows what he is and holds fast to it, refusing to be drawn away by any necessity or temptation, he begins to uncover himself, to do what his inmost nature demands and takes joy in, that is to say, begins to create. Indeed there may be much difference in the forms that different souls take. But because each is itself, therefore each is grounded upon the fundamental equality of things. All our valuations are in reference to some standard or other set up with a particular end in view, but that is a question of the practical world which in no way takes away from the intrinsic value of the greatness of the soul. So long as the thing is there, the how of it does not matter. Infinite are the ways of manifestation and all of them the very highest and the most sublime, provided they are

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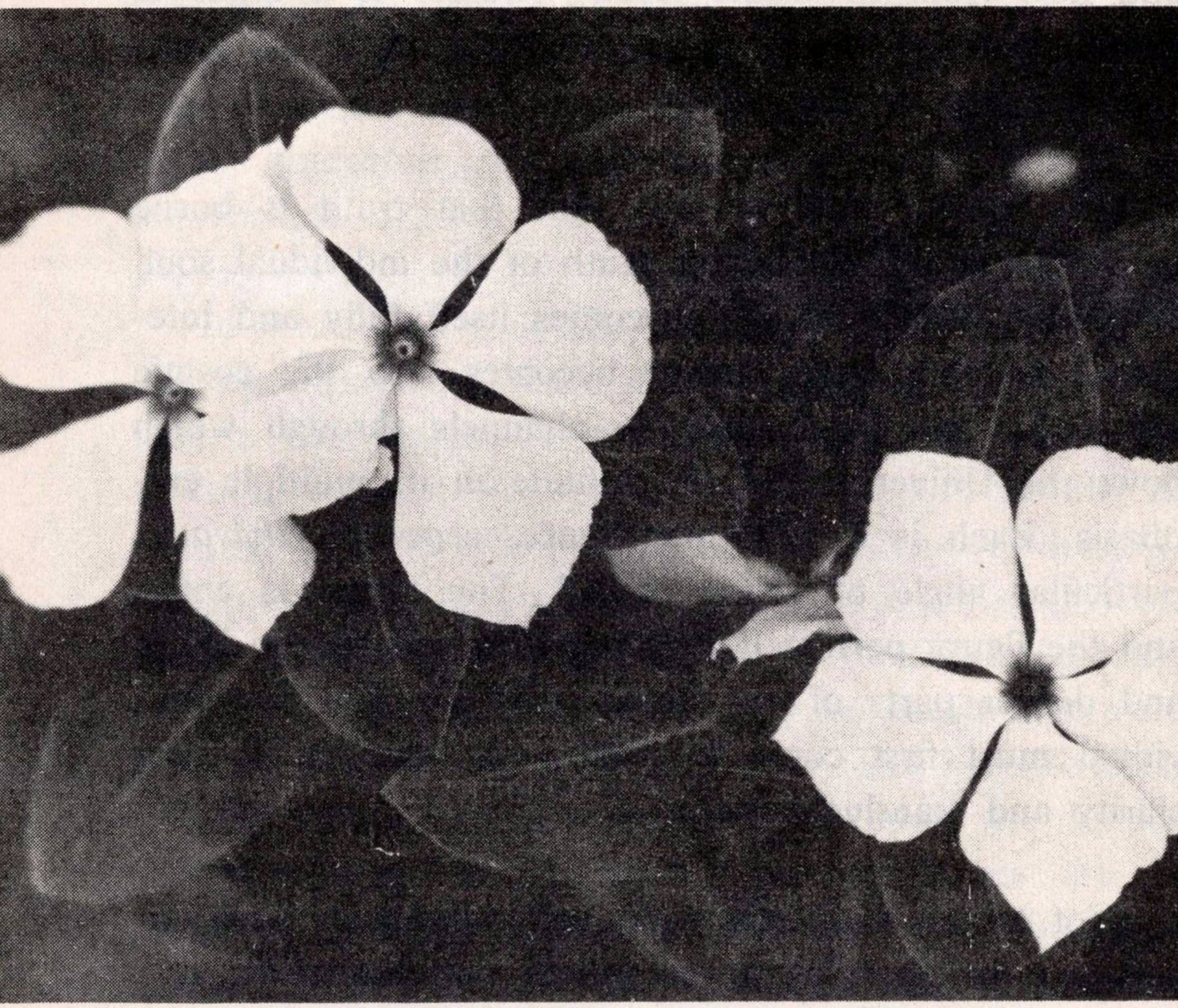
a manifestation of the soul itself, provided they rise and flow from the same level. Whether it is Agni or Indra, Varuna, Mitra or the Aswins, it is the same supreme and divine inflatus.

The cosmic soul is true. But that truth is borne out, effectuated only by the truth of the individual soul. When the individual soul becomes itself fully and integrally, by that very fact it becomes also the cosmic soul. The individuals are the channels through which flows the Universal and the Infinite in its multiple emphasis. Each is a particular figure, aspect — *Bhāva*, a particular angle of vision of All. The vision is entire and the figure perfect if it is not refracted by the lower and denser parts of our being. And for that the individual must first come to itself and shine in its opal clarity and translucency.

Not to do what others do, but what your soul impels you to do. Not to be others but your own self. Not to be anything but the very cosmic and infinite divinity of your soul. Therein lies your highest freedom and perfect delight. And there you are supremely creative. Each soul has a consort — *Prakṛti*, Nature — which it creates out of its own rib. And in this field of infinite creativity the soul lives, moves and has its being.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(*Evolution and the Earthly Destiny*, pp. 77-79)



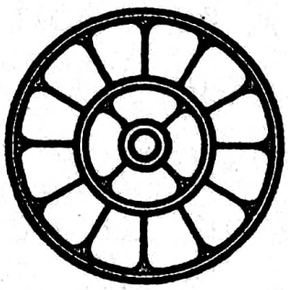
PROGRESS

The reason why we are on earth.

(*Spiritual significance and explanation are given by the Mother*)

Botanical name: Catharanthus roseus

Common name: Madagascar Periwinkle



Do not think of what you have been, think only of what you want to be and you are sure to progress.

With my blessings

M.